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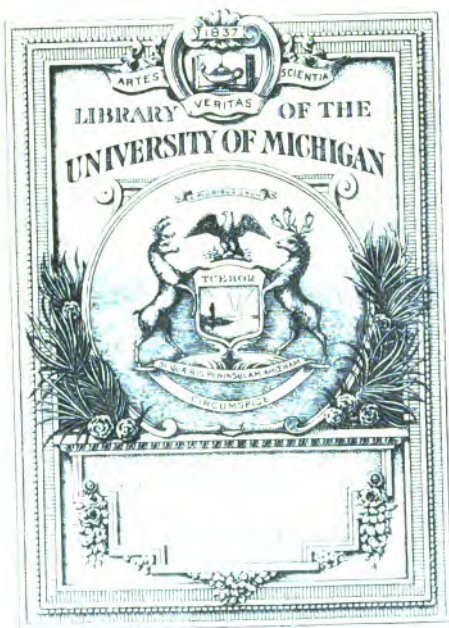
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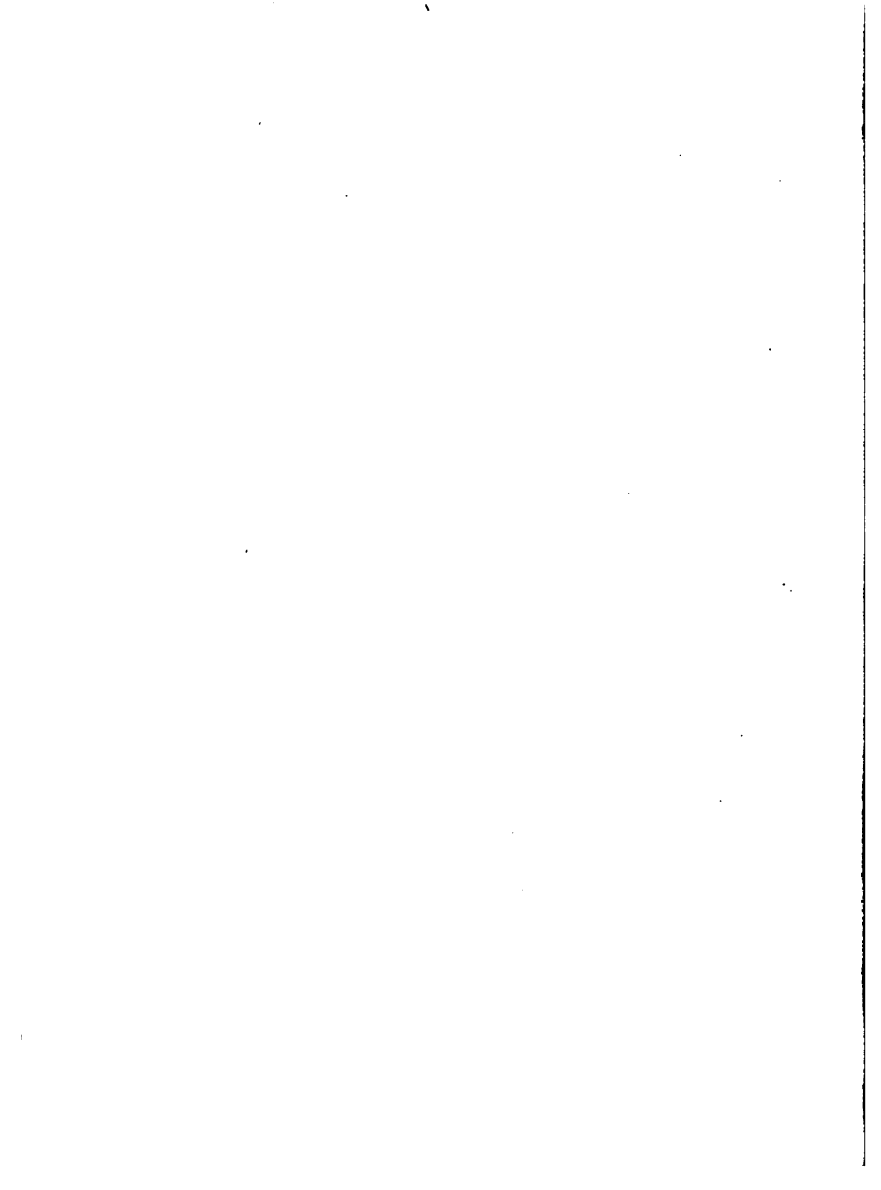
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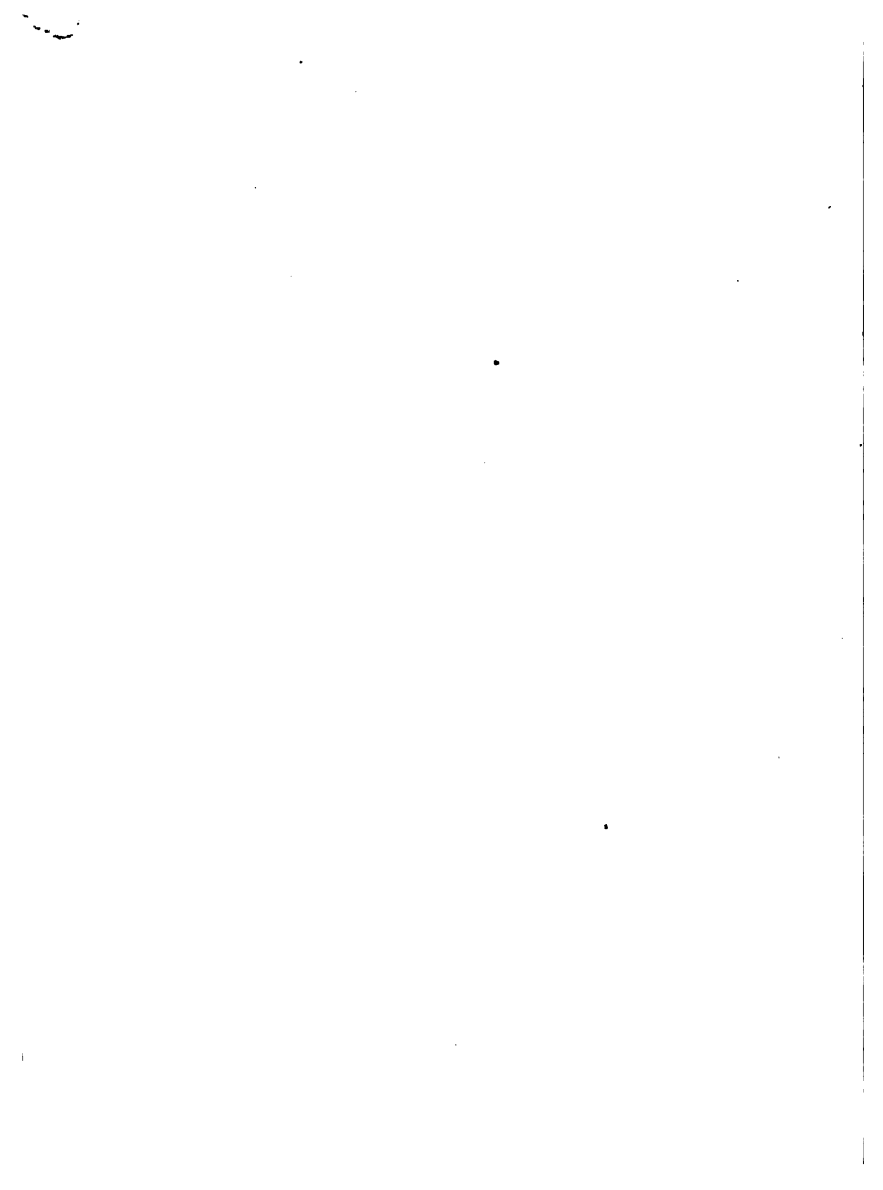




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Odes of Anacreon

Translated by S. C. Irving

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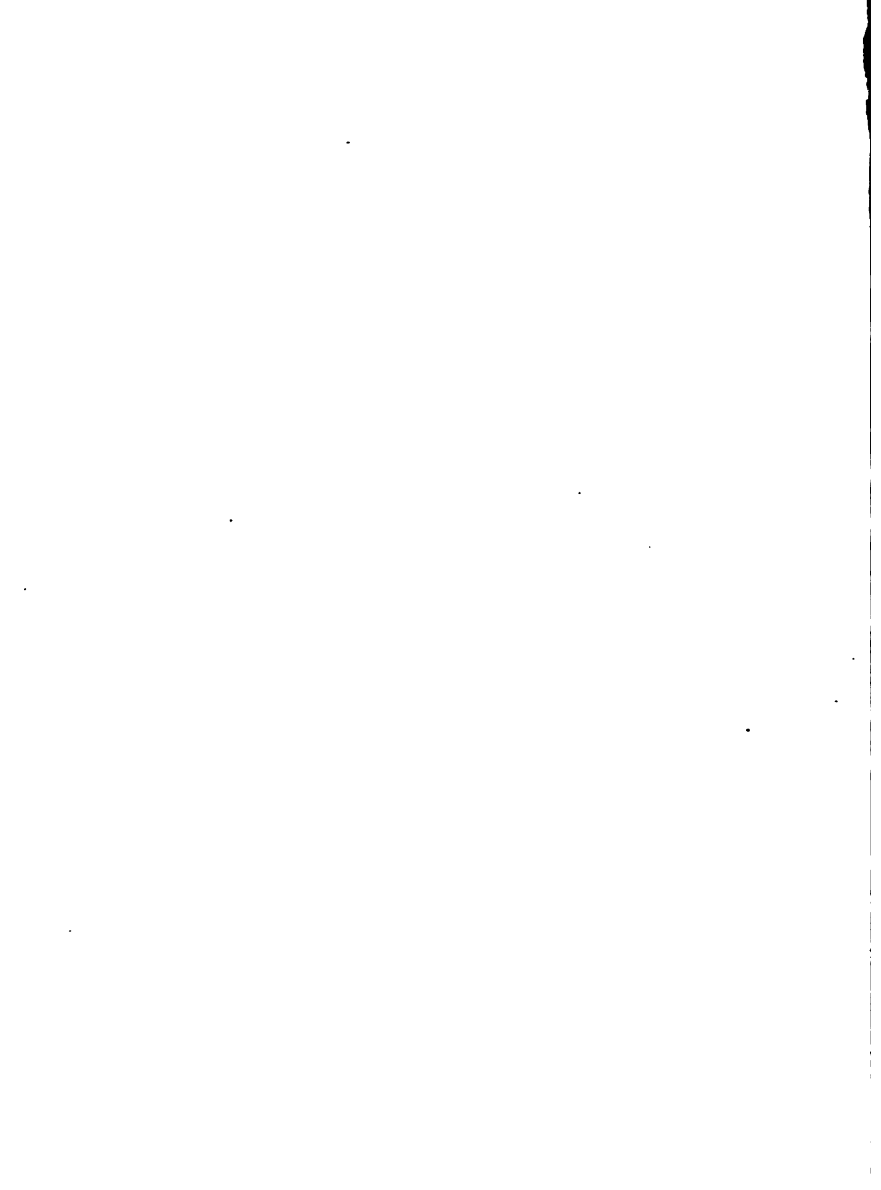
WILLIAM S. LORD
EVANSTON

1902

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S. C. IRVING

To the Memory of my Father

140496



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*Tho' Hades holds him fast,
His lyre abides not there;
Oh no: his songs still last
And journey everywhere.*

Simondes Epigram on Anacreon.

IN translating these old Greek Songs the main purpose was to preserve the spirit and atmosphere of the Original and at the same time keep as safely within the limits of the text as the rules of verse would permit. In truth this required no great effort, for if there is one thing more than another remarkable about these frail specimens of the Greek genius, it is the likeness they bear to the thought and expression of our modern day. According to the letter these Odes are old, in spirit they are distinctly fresh and modern. Their very human qualities have saved them from oblivion; their weakness proved their strength and gave them grace to live long after many things more substantial perished in the minds and memories of men

S. C. I.

THE POETS

Ode I.

MINGLE, my boy, a little draught for me
In such wise, now, as I shall tell to thee.
First, mark my words, into this goblet run
A little of that old Anacreon.
Now take that slender flagon over there—
'Tis Sapho's own, no better anywhere—
And pour into the glass to give it strength
Just about half your little finger's length.
"There now, my master, surely it will do;"
Nay, boy, not yet; a little Pindar too.
There, there, 'tis full, the glass o'erflows the crown;
Just hand it me and I will drink it down.
Methinks Apollo, should he chance to come
Upon me now, would say, "Just mix me some
Of that same brew I see you tippling there".
Or if the Paphian maid should this way fare
With Eros, her companion, wandering free,
They both would cry, "Ho, Servus, make it three."

WAR AND PEACE

Ode II.

AYE, a man of peace am I—
Thus I've lived, thus may I die.
Give me Homer's lyric skill
And I'll sing to suit my will—
Not of slaughter, not of might,
But of wine and its delight.
Bring me records, laws, decrees,
See what I shall do with these.
Stir them in my drinking glass,
Then to pleasure quickly pass.
Why should men a record keep,
When so soon they fall asleep?
Vastly I the dance prefer
To all laws that ever were.
Song and wine and Bacchic mirth
Are the best of things on earth.
Wisely, then, it seemeth me,
Men engage in revelry.
While I look in pleasure's eye
All my powers multiply.
When the Corybantes shout

And the dance becomes a rout,
Then my fingers, skillful grown,
Run along the barbiton,
Finding notes in some old score
Which I never knew before.
With old madness of the brain
I can sing and shout again
That old song, unique, divine—
"There's no joy on earth like wine."
Aye, a man of peace am I—
Thus I've lived, thus may I die.
Give me Homer's lyric skill
And I'll sing to suit my will.

TWO WAYS

Ode III.

SOME folk say that Attis lost
All his senses when love-crost
By young Cybele, the fair.
Who for Attis didn't care.
And they say—oh, it was sad—
Attis went so staring mad
That upon the hills he ran
Just like any savage man.
There be many ways, I find,
For a man to lose his mind.
For example, some folk go
When they wish to drown their woe
To the springs of Clarus cool,
Sacred to Apollo's rule—
Hard by Colophon are these,
Underneath the laurel trees—
There if they their thirst assauge
After this they frenzied rage,
But these methods are not mine.
Just give me a jar of wine.

And to rightly season it
Of sweet balsam just a bit—
Now along with this request
Grant a friend of mine the best—
Then just watch me for awhile
You'll see raging done in style.
'Tis this manner that I choose
When I would my senses lose.

MADNESS

Ode IV.

I CONJURE the gods that they
Will on me their wrath delay
While I lose my self-control
In the soul-inspiring bowl.
Mad I would be, yet not so
As to cause another woe.
Look what madness fell on these,
Alcmæon and Orestes—
How as fugitives they fled,
Each with blood upon his head.
Pitiful and all distraught
With the crimes their madness wrought.
Ne'er of me shall this be said—
Blood of grapes is all I shed.
You know well how long ago,
Raging with that fearful bow
Which from Iphitus he had,
Hercules went raving mad.
Ajax, too, with that same spear
Which he had from Hector dear,
Frenzied grew and sent below

Souls of many, friend and foe.
But in me the world may see
Just how needless weapons be.
Owning neither spear nor bow,
Everywhere I scathless go,
Armed with but this beaker slim,
With a wreath about the rim.

THE REASON

Ode V.

BARREN plain and dry hilltops
Drink with joy the liquid drops.
Leafy trees, with their light bowers
Laugh to hear the summer showers.
To restore the boundless main
Winds oft pour the pelting rain.
Apollo's beam, with license free,
Drinks the waters of the sea.
Pale Diana on her way
From the sun drinks day by day;
Plants, trees and Mother Earth
Are examples to our mirth.
Should ye, then, O comrades mine,
Grudge me one small cup of wine?

THE WINECUP

Ode VI.

GOOD Hephæstus, workman true,
Here's a task I have for you.
"Suit of armor, shield and spear?"
I need no such fighting gear,
But a winecup make for me.
Hollowed out most handily.
Now before you undertake it
I shall show you how to make it.
Scenes of violence and waste
Must not on this cup be traced.
Heroes clad in fighting clothes
Going forth to meet their foes,
Chariot nor charioteer
Must not on this cup appear.
No, nor any cruel star
Which betokens strife and war—
Fierce Orion, Hyades,
Make no emblems such as these—
But instead of these you may
Tracery of leaves display,
Tendrils of the fruitful vine,

Purple grapes that laugh with wine.
And as central figure fair
Carve me Bacchus lying there
Underneath the leaves outspread.
With his arm beneath his head.

IF WEALTH FOR ME COULD BUY

Ode VII.

IF wealth for me could buy
New lease of life when old,
No man more close than I
Would hoard the yellow gold:
So that when at my door
Death's footfall I should hear,
I'd hand him out his score
And he would disappear.
Since gold cannot avail
To stretch my life one hair,
For it, then, should I wail
Or for it have a care?
Nay, rather be it mine,
Whatever fortune sends,
To have good store of wine,
Sweet books and hosts of friends.

PHILOSOPHY

Ode VIII.

NEVER was it care to me
How rich other folk might be.
All the piled-up heaps of gold
Which the Sardinian princes hold,
Cyges great and other kings
Rich in many earthly things—
Naught of all these e'er possessed
Stirs up envy in my breast.
Rather this shall be my care:
To anoint with oil my hair
And to wear about my head
Roses many, white and red.
This day only can I claim.
Who knows if 'twill be the same
On the morrow? Just as fair?
And if so, shall I be there?
Therefore, while all is serene,
Pleasure's harvest I shall glean—
Play a little, throw the dice,
Pour a daily sacrifice
To the god who helps to bear

All men's heavy load of care.
So when Death shall come my way
I shall have no need to say,
"I'm not ready yet—I think
I should have some chance to drink."

LOVE AND LEARNING

Ode IX.

WHY to me descendant of laws,
Premises and legal saws,
When you know that from this rot
I no benefit have got?
Better tell me, I opine,
How to drain a glass of wine;
Better teach me how to play
With fair Venus while I may.
See, already on my brow
Snows of age are falling now,
Warning me how soon I must
Yield to darkness and to dust.
Hasten, boy the water pour
From the cup I drink no more.
Fling your water flasks all by—
Wine alone doth satisfy
One who fain would drink so deep
That his soul should fall asleep.
Shortly here I shall abide;
Soon, too soon, the grave shall hide
Every spark of mortal fire
And the dead have no desire.

SORROW'S ANTIDOTE

Ode X.

WHEN the weary heart and mind
Sweet nepenthe fain would find
Naught like wine so swift can bring
Clad surcease to sorrowing.
So it comes that when I feel
Thoughts of sadness o'er me steal
I with Bacchus vigils keep
Till my senses fall asleep.
Why with sorrow should we groan
And like foolish children moan
When to every sorrow's sting
Wine her solace soon will bring?
Tell me this: Should we take note
When we have such antidote?
Willy nilly soon or late
We must leave this present state:
Leave it? Yes; and where do men
After death turn up again?
Why should I, then, fail to gain
What of good there doth remain?
Therefore say I, friend of mine,

Drink you till your stint of wine
So that if tonight Death came
You'd stand even with the game.

LOVE'S EXACTIONS

Ode XI.

BENEATH the myrtle trees,
Where lotus flowers twine,
Would I could lie at ease,
And pledge the rosy wine.
But love with rarer wine
Calls to me from his bowers,
And bids me to resign
The joys of field and flowers.
About his shoulders free
He flings his tunic brave,
And now attends on me
Like an Egyptian slave.
Oh, life goes spinning by
Like wheels that may not rust,
And soon we all must lie
Dissolved in quiet dust.
Why, then, with useless toil
Should we libations pour,
Or waste our wine and oil
On those that are no more?

To uses far more fair
Were wine and oil design'd,
And while I live I swear
They'll not be thus confin'd.

Upon my beard and face
Let oil and wine run down,
And you, ye maids, with grace
My head with roses crown.

To dance the dance of death,
I soon must go below;
So while I have a breath
I will not dream of woe.

This of my thoughts is chief—
To use life while I may,
For, oh! the hour is brief
Till I am borne away.

YOUTH AND AGE

Ode XII.

THE girls all say to me:
 "Anacreon, you're so old
That women folk decree
 'Tis time to cut you cold.
In proof of what we say,
 Just get a glass and see
How very thin and gray
 Your hair has grown to be."
Now, ladies, I confess
 I'm somewhat short on hair,
And yet if I had less
 I should not greatly care.
But this I'd have you know,
 All ye fair Teian maids—
Youth's spirits in me grow
 As I approach the shades.

THE OLD MAN PROTESTS

Ode XIII.

OLD, you say? Yes, 'tis the truth
That I've over-passed my youth,
Yet in spite of this I can
Still out-drink a younger man;
And in making merry, why
I can still old age defy.
For example, let there be
Satyr dance with mimicry.
With old ease the part I take
Of Silenus, that old rake,
Who, to make the rabble laugh,
Takes a wine-skin for a staff.
Why not use a narthex? Stuff!
That would never hold enough.
He who wills to fight and slay,
Why, sir, let him fight, say.
As for me, I never could
In these things see aught that's good.
Ho, there, Servus, bring along,
To help finish this brief song.
Cup of that good liquor there.

Just behind the cellar stair.
"Did you mean the larger cup"?
Yes, that's right: do hurry up.
Getting old, you say? That's so.
Yet I shall not yet forego
Joys that many think, forsooth,
Must alone belong to youth.

IN DEFENSE OF AGE

Ode XIV.

THOUGH a man may be forespent
With the cares the fates have sent,
Yet he still may bear his part
With a brave and cheerful heart,
When in choral dance and song
Youth and beauty move along.
How it pleases me to know
There are hearts untouched of woe!
And if midst this band appears
One whose head is white with years
You must know he is not old,
Though his days are almost told,
And that still his heart is light,
Though his hair is snowy white.

TEACHING THE YOUNG

Ode XV.

WHEN a crowd of youth I see
Joined in sport and revelry
I forget at once my age
And with them would straight engage.
In a flutter then am I
Once again the dance to try.
Like a youth upon whose head
Twenty summers have not sped.
Bring me roses; I would wear
Garlands sweet upon my hair,
Just like those fair girls and boys
Whose quick feet the dance employs.
Now, if some good friend of mine
Will just grant a draught of wine
I will show what vigor can
Still reside in an old man,
Who, though age doth o'er him steal,
Still can rave and be genteel.

THINGS WORTH WHILE

Ode XVI.

PLEASED am I when I have learned
Sportive Bacchus hath returned,
For it is the season when
All the world grows young again.
There be many joys that I
Cherish with a careful eye.
One among them is to play
On my lyre in summer day
With a comrade by my side
Who can with me joys divide.
But of all the joys of earth
I have met with since my birth
Chiefest is to sit with maid
Underneath the laurel shade
Weaving hyacinths with care
Into crowns for her bright hair.
Though in life my part is small
Envy hath no part at all.
Poisoned shafts of calumny
Like the pestilence I flee,
And when feasting turns to fight

It no longer gives delight.
Waited on by blooming youth,
Who have known nor care nor ruth.
I would spend what days remain
Dancing to the lyre's refrain,
Having every hour to pass
Still as cloud above the grass.

THE REBELLIOUS HARP

Ode XVII.

OFT 'tis in my heart to raise
Songs for heroes of old days—
Agamemnon, Cadmus, too—
Each of these I've tried to do,
But my harp, rebellious grown,
Speaks of love and love alone.
Thinking it might be deranged,
Recently the strings I changed,
— And indeed I may say true,
— Made it look as if 'twere new.
Then I thought I could with ease
Sing of Valiant Hercules,
But my harp, unchanged in tone,
Spoke of love and love alone.
Henceforth, heroes, it is plain
We must strangers aye remain,
For my harp, rebellious grown,
Speaks of love and love alone.

THE COMBAT

Ode XVIII.

TO persuade me 'gainst my will,
Love exhausted all his skill.
Useless all his efforts were—
I would still my fate defer.
Crossed at this my willfulness,
He, determined on redress,
Seized his bow and quiver bright
And would have me out to fight.
Challenged thus, I could not fly,
But, resolved to do or die,
Straightway with alertness rose
And put on my fighting clothes.
Breastplate, shield and spear I wore—
—Arms like great Achilles bore.
Thus accoutered on each side,
Love and I conclusions tried.
First, so thick his arrows flew
I had all that I could do,
Dodging all his darts of flame
As in clouds they swiftly came.
Pretty soon I saw he'd spent

All his store of armament.
Vexed he stood a little spell.
Then he shot—oh, strange to tell!
Not an arrow from his bow,
But himself he did let go.
And this arrow, fatal dart,
Struck me fairly in the heart.
Then a pain all through me run
And I saw myself undone.
What availeth bow and spear
And the best of fighting gear
When the fight you hope to win
Is not outside, but within?

THE NUMBER

Ode XIX.

IF the leaves of all the trees
One may reckon up with ease.
If the billows of the sea
One may number faithfully,
Such a person safely dares
To compute my love affairs.
First, in Athens for a start,
Twenty times I lost my heart.
Twenty? No, I think the score
Should, perhaps, be twenty more.
Then in Coriath? Now, I'm lost,
Anyhow it was no frost,
For you know Achaia's where
Women are surpassing fair.
Still, attend while I recall
Names and places of them all:
Lesbia, Ionia, Rhodes—
How the list my conscience loads!
Though my mind is not exact,
Yet I do affirm the fact
That in places named above

I was fifty times in love.
What? You say you are appalled?
So am I, though I've not called
Nearly all the roll for you.
There is Egypt, Syria, too,
And the happy Cretan isle,
Where I wandered once awhile—
Tarried long enough to get
Tangled fast in Cupid's net.
Do you wish me to relate
How in Spain I met my fate?
With what fires of love I burned
When in Cadiz I sojourned?
Shall I yet of Indus tell?
Bactria and what befell?
Endless task 'tis to enroll
All the passions of my soul.

LOVE'S INSISTENCE

Ode XX.

YOU, friend swallow, come and go.
In the spring you build your nest,
But when wintry tempests blow
Nile and Memphis suit you best.
Love nor times nor seasons fears,
Never from his place departs,
But with ceaseless toil uprears
Tenements in human hearts.

First desire's gentle smart
Flutters faintly in the heart.
Soon it grows and grows to be
In awhile a fledgling free.
From this time always arise
Gaping nestlings' hungry cries.
Little nurslings when they're bred
Are by greater nursed and fed
Till these fledglings, larger grown,
Gender others of their own.
What's a man to do, I pray,
Who is fashioned in this way?

No man hath the power to chase
Love's long legions from their place.
You, friend swallow, stay awhile,
Then you seek the sunny Nile.
Love forever with his art
Weaves his nest within the heart.

THE OVERTHROW

Ode XXI.

SOME the tales of Thebes relate—
How its heroes met their fate.
Others all their skill employ
Singing deeds in fated Troy.
I, ah, me! can only tell
How I flourished once and fell.
Not upon the crimson field
Was I ever forced to yield;
Troops of horse ne'er caused my fall
Nor did footman me enchain:
Not from ships that fighting go
Did I get my final blow.
Soldiers with a weapon new
Did assault and me undo,
And the arms these victors used
Were alone by love diffused.

LOVE'S TREACHERY

Ode XXII.

T WAS the hour when o'er the world
Night's dark banner is unfurled,
When the Bear begins to run
Backward from the horizon,
And the Herdsman from afar
Waits to hail his faithful star,
Whose bright honor 'tis to keep
Sentry while his charges sleep:
When the race of men all glide
Softly down a silent tide,
Bound by slumber's subtle chain
Knowing naught of joy or pain.
At this hour, with great uproar,
Love came knocking at my door.
Startled out of sleep, I cried:
"Who's that knocking there, outside?"
Then the answer, faint and mild:
"Please, sir, I'm a little child.
I am wet with cold and dew
And all helpless come to you.
Do not fear me, I'm so small

I could harm no one at all.
There's no moon to light my way
And all night I've gone astray."
Hearing all this tender plea
Pity gained the mastery.
Then my door I opened wide,
And there stood a child outside.
Armed he was, as you may know,
Arrows, quiver and a bow—
Just as he is always dressed
When he goes upon his quest.
Quick within I drew the waif
And his hands began to chafe,
Cherished them till they had grown
Warm and pleasant as my own.
And I pressed his careless hair,
For the dew had gathered there.
When with warmth he was aglow
"Come," he said, "let's try this bow.
Maybe I a loss have met
Having got my bow-string wet."
Then he drew, and, oh, his dart
Went a-stinging through my heart.
Seeing this, he danced with glee.

Saying, "Friend, rejoice with me.
For my bow still stands the test
And your heart—well, you know best."

A DOUBTFUL BARGAIN

Ode XXIII.

ONCE, within the market place,
Pausing for a little space
To survey the wares that come
Into our emporium,
I espied a youth whose store
Dwindling fell till nothing more
Than a waxen cupid, small,
Was remaining in his stall.
This to sell he vainly tried,
Ever buyer seemed supplied.
More to banter than to buy,
Stepping up to him, said I:
"How much for that waxen elf,
Which I see upon your shelf?"
Speaking Doric, he replied:
"What you will: I'm satisfied.
But before you buy it, sir,
I this caution will confer:
He who buys this roguish elf
Taketh trouble to himself.
Thus I give you warning fair:

Buy it now, sir, if you dare."
Stirred I was, of course, and said:
"I for him conceive no dread,
But believe that he will be
A good angel unto me."
So I bought him from the lad,
Half way joyous, half way sad.

CUPID'S LESSON

Ode XXIV.

WHEN roses bloomed like flame
Love dallied once, care-free,
Unconscious that he came
Too near a sleeping bee.
Aroused from his sweet rest
The roses there among,
The bee, with wrath possessed,
Love's little finger stung.
Then to his mother dear
Love ran with hands outspread,
And cried in tones of fear:
"Oh, mother! I'm dead!
A serpent, armed with claws,
Hath dealt a fatal blow—
A bee, I think it was,
And yet I hardly know."
Then answered Venus fair:
"If bee sting hurts you so
How think you those can bear
The wounds that you bestow."

LOVE A CAPTIVE

Ode XXV.

ONCE the muses solemnly
Gave to Kallos this decree:
"Wheresoever Love you find
Take him and securely bind
With such chains as may be wove
Out of flowers from field and grove."
This commandment Kallos kept,
Taking Love before he slept.
Now, when Venus this had heard,
All her mother passion stirred,
And with ransom rich she came,
Hoping to her son reclaim.
But his jailer, now grown bold,
Pushed aside the yellow gold.
Saying: "'Tis a useless thing.
All this treasure that you bring:
For I am enamored grown,
Claiming him to be my own,
And if I should loose his chain
He with me would still remain."

ILLUSION

Ode XXVI.

LULLED to sleep by that divine
Care destroyer, friendly wine,
I on purple carpets lay
Dreaming all the night away.
In this visionary show,
Airly, as on tip-toe,
I with maiden ran a race
In an open, public place.
While along the course we speed
Many heartless jests were said
By the crowd whose mirth was stirred
With a contest so absurd.
But the worst of it befell—
This I'm something loath to tell—
When to kiss the maid I tried
She vanished from my side,
Leaving me so dead alone
That I awakened with a groan.

THE SWALLOW

Ode XXVII.

TWITTERING swallow, what shall I
Do to stop your ceaseless cry?
Does some sorrow's aching smart
Dwell forever in your heart?
Is there balm that I may bring
To allay your suffering?
Must I clip your pinions small,
So you cannot fly at all?
It may be you would improve
If I should your tongue remove,
Like Tereus in the tale
Did unto the nightingale.
Your shrill clamors ever chase
Visions of my lover's face
Which I'd see if I could dream
When the sun begins to beam.
But your early cries of late
All my visions dissipate.
Say, friend swallow, please remit
Your fond song a little bit,
So that I in dreams may see
Bathyllus, who's dear to me.

LOVE'S AMBASSADOR

Ode XXVIII.

THE STRANGER TO THE DOVE

ON what embassy of love
Dost thou fly, oh faithful dove,
At this early hour of morn,
While the day is hardly born?
What sweet odor this I smell
As from banks of asphodel
'Twere wafted; tell me whence
Comes this smell of frank-incense
Which I breathe as if the air
Were all sown with spices rare.
Tell me messenger of love,
Why you now so early rove.

THE DOVE REPLIES

ME, Anacreon doth send
To Bathyllus, his dear friend,
Who, new-risen in estate,
Every one would cultivate.
I, you know, served Venus long.
But she sold me for a song
To Anacreon, the Bard,
Whom I serve for a reward.
Even now I bear with me
These his letters, which you see.
Late I think I heard him state
He would me emancipate:
But if I should freedom gain,
I his servant would remain.
For what 'vantage doth it yield
To inhabit wood and field
Deep in forests sadly brood,
Eating wild, uncanny food.
When my daily bread I may
Get from human hands alway:
Quench my thirst from that same bowl
Which renews my master's soul.

Join the dance with him, or spread
My still wings about his head;
And if ever I should tire,
I may stoop upon his lyre.
Dwelling with him thus I share
Joys those dwellers of the air,
Blown about by every wind
Do not and can never find.
There, you have the reasons all
Why I am Anacreon's thrall.
Now your pardon I beseech
For this too-extended speech.
I'm afraid that it will show
I have changed from dove to crow.

DISTRIBUTION OF GIFTS

Ode XXIX.

NATURE doth with gifts adorn
Every creature that is born.
Unto bulls are horns immense,
Horses, hoofs, for their defense.
For the helpless hare's estate
Fleetness doth it compensate.
Throughout nature it is shown
Every creature hath his own.
Unto lions she bestows
Gleaming teeth in savage rows;
To the fishes there is lent
Skill to ply their element;
Guided through th' uncertain air
All the wild birds know her care.
Unto men she courage gave
And a yearning to be brave.
Thus was nature so bereft
That for woman naught was left.
What's to do in such a case
But to make her fair of face?
This was done, and from that hour
Beauty hath been woman's dower.

Thus equipped, her flag unfurled,
Woman conquers all the world.
Weapons none, nor spear nor shield,
Yet all foes to her do yield.
What is valor, what is might
In the face of beauty bright?
Men whose hearts have joyed to know
Fate had chosen them to go
On some perilous emprise
Where death lurked with hungry eyes,
Dumb have stood as pillared stone
When confronted all alone
By a foe whose weapons were
A sweet face and sunny hair.
What doth human strength avail
When a Helen doth assail?
Of what use is it to brave
Looks that can outlast the grave?
Down they drop great heroes all,
Weak as sparrows on the wall,
Frail as thread of spider's loom
In the corners of the room.
Thus it is since time began,
Thus 'twill be while man is man.

A PICTURE

Ode XXX.

PORTRAIT painter, you whose art
Can to pictures life impart,
Artist, best of all in Rhodes,
Whom the age with honor loads,
Come and paint my love for me
As I shall unfold to thee.
First of all, you must portray
Hair dark purple, soft, as say,
Waxen colors you must use,
Fragrant odors to diffuse.
Cheeks like apples, full and fair,
Shadowed by the wandering hair.
Let the brow like ivory show—
Not too high and not too low.
Here a caution I must state;
Eyebrows should not separate;
Neither will it be well done
If they bold, together run:
Rather all your efforts bend
That the lids' dark arch may blend

Hardly noticed; so petite
Where the lines extended meet.
Give the look a touch of fire—
Melting, too, with soft desire.
Shining like Athena stern
And like Venus gently yearn.
Now, go on with cheek and nose
Mingling lily with the rose.
Then the lips—O Zeus and Pan!
It surpasses the lips of man
To portray the grace divine
Of those lips incarnadine.
There persuasion sits and sings
Endless music, nameless things;
Sweet allurements, utter bliss,
Challenging always a kiss.
Your best skill to marble throat
And to dainty chin devote,
So that all the graces may
'Round about the picture play.
Now for drapery; let her be
Clad in robes of porphyry
So arranged as to express
All her figure's loveliness.

There you have it: well done, too!
See, the picture smiles at you.

TRANSFORMATIONS

Ode XXXI.

ON the Phrygian mountain high,
Seen by every passer-by
Stands a cliff whose head uprears
Far across the gulf of years.
This lone cliff by some is said
To have been a woman bred—
Child of Tantalus, a king,
Changed to stone by suffering,
There's another tale I've heard
Of a maiden changed to bird.
Procne, old Pandion's child,
Now doth flit a swallow wild.
Transformations such as these
Never did my fancy please.
If another body I
E'er should be compelled to try
I should chose to be thy glass
Where my Helen oft doth pass,
Or the favored scroll or book
Where her eyes do often look.
I would be the garment fair

That she chooses oft to wear,
Or the water whose pure wave
Doth her form and feature lave,
Balm and oil I'd be conjoint,
So that I might her anoint;
Ribands, too, that I might rest
Fearlessly upon her breast.
Pearls I'd be or gem of note,
Just to hang about her throat.
Even sandals I would be,
That her feet might tread on me.

THE PICTURE EXPLAINED

Ode XXXII.

HERE'S the picture, boy, of Zeus
When he played that clever ruse
On old Phœnix's child who ne'er
Dreamed of falling in such snare.
Now, I say, that guise so thin
Should a girl have taken in
Proves to me that there's a node
In that famous episode.
Yes, it's like a bull, I know,
But a difference doth show
Quite sufficient to make clear
It is Zeus that we see here.
Think you that a bull could bear
That Sidonian sitting there
Such a distance, with such ease
O'er the rough, uncertain seas?
Plow the waves and curl the foam
As if ocean were his home?
Such a thing has not occurred
That a bull from out the herd

Should forsake his meadow grass
And attempt the seas to pass.
No sir, boy, it was a ruse,
And that bull is simply Zeus.

SPRING

Ode XXXIII.

SEE, when spring's first hopes disclose
How the graces bring the rose.
Look you, how the restless sea
Slumbers now in sympathy.
Wanton winds that tossed the waves
Now have sought the ocean caves,
And the sea all peaceful lies,
Calmed by nature's lullabies.
Waterfowl begin to seek
Every tiny bay and creek,
Eager to take up the cares
Of a home and its affairs.
See the cranes, how they go forth,
Shrilly crying toward the north;
They have heard the call, and they
With old wisdom must obey.
Clouds and shadows disappear
And the sun now shineth clear.
Herbs spring up and fields grow green,
So that earth is hardly seen.

Everywhere the eye may view
Signs of labor mortals do.
Now the sap returned from root,
Creeps into each leaf and shoot,
While the fruit from hour to hour
Cometh nearer to its flower.

IN HONOR OF THE ROSE

Ode XXXIV.

TO the flower of love, the rose,
Honors fitting we propose.
And to further this design
We invoke the god of wine.
—Bacchus ever loves to grace
Scenes where beauty shows her face—
Come, my friends, your temples bind
With long roses intertwined.
And with laughter light propose
Your full beakers to the rose.
Choicest darling of the spring,
Nature's fairest offering,
You, oh rose, of beauty blest,
Cover arms and head and breast.
Now, oh child of Venus bred,
With your own hands dress each head,
And that joy may still enhance,
Join the graces in their dance.
Crown me too; 'tis my desire,
And I'll pay you with my lyre.

Yes, I am not young, 'tis true,
But I love the roses too.
Now lead on the happy line
Till we come to Dion's shrine,
Where, all banked about with flowers,
We shall dream away the hours.

THE GRASSHOPPER

Ode XXXV.

TETTIX, we esteem thee blest
When from thy cool, leafy nest
Drunk with dew thou seem'st to sing.
Fearless—happy as a king.
And in truth a king's domain
Is the world where thou doth reign.
For all things thine eye doth see
Beareth tribute unto thee.
Shadowy forest, sunny field
Unto thee their treasures yield:
Every season's changing dress
Brings to thee some loveliness,
Harming naught within thy ken.
Thou art friend to husbandmen:
For thy presence, light as air,
Mortals bless thee everywhere.
Phœbus' love for thee is strong.
For he gave thy liquid song.
Thought of age and waning powers
Gives thee no unquiet hours.

